

An invitation for denominations and movements

2021 National Church Life Survey | 30 YEARS

2021 National Church Life Survey Proposal

Christian denominations and movements are invited to work together to continue this national research study to resource and equip churches.



Participating groups in past National Church Life Surveys



2021ncls.org.au

An Invitation to Australian Churches

2021 National Church Life Survey

CREDIBLE



UNIFYING



VITAL



PROPHETIC



Mission research with academic credibility and practical life-giving resources.

Life to the full (John 10:10)



To Christian church leaders,

You are warmly invited to take part in the 2021 National Church Life Survey.



As churches make their way into 2021, it is clear they have lived through a most complex year of challenge.

The 2021 NCLS is being designed to provide insight and evidence to equip leadership decisions in the current climate.

We aim to help church leaders shape a way forward, as they move their congregation into varied modes of gathering, or perhaps develop a 'new normal'. The NCLS survey tools allow leaders to listen, evaluate and reflect amidst this process. It is a positive, inclusive way to connect with churchgoers, church leaders and to the local community.

Our times are different but our aim remains the same:

to encourage church vitality in the Australian context, to connect churches to their local communities, and to strengthen effective and sustainable leadership practices.

Every five years since 1991, NCLS Research has invited Christian churches in Australia to take part in the National Church Life Survey (NCLS). With collaboration across churches it is now the largest, longest running survey of church life in the world.

To run the 2021 NCLS, we rely on a close partnership with denominations and regions to coordinate the involvement of local churches. For the sake of the whole Australian Church, we hope to hear as many diverse voices as possible.

We hope you will join this collaborative venture of churches of all sizes, in all contexts and across faith traditions.

*Dr Ruth Powell
and the NCLS Research team
on behalf of the NCLS Research
Board of Governors.*

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2021 NCLS: Goals and Outcomes

Goals for the 2021 NCLS

- To describe and explain what is
- For local churches: to help them reflect and plan
- For local leadership: to review effectiveness & wellbeing
- For national & regional leadership: to evaluate and plan
- To continue the longitudinal study of church life
- For the wider community

2021 NCLS Outcomes



a. A process which resources **denominational leaders**



b. A process which resources **local churches**



c. Research-based **evidence for decisions**

NCLS Regional Coordinators

Regional Coordinators are nominated by their denomination or region (synod, state etc.) to liaise with NCLS Research throughout the survey project. In most cases this person oversees the organisation of the survey in their region and is the main point of contact for their churches.

We will provide survey project information and promotional material for use with local churches.

Contact NCLS Research office with any inquiries.

A list of Regional Coordinators will be on the 2021 NCLS website for local churches to make contact with.



2021 NCLS: A snapshot

October to November 2021

20+ denominations and movements
Thousands of local churches and local church leaders

Hundreds of thousands of attenders

Every local church gets their own results & planning resources

Every five years, alongside National Census and Australian Community Survey

Previous: 1991, 1996, 2001, 2006, 2011, 2016

This national collaboration offers research-based evidence and processes to resource:

- ✓ Denominational leaders
- ✓ Regional leaders (e.g. states, dioceses, synods, presbyteries)
- ✓ Local church leaders
- ✓ Local churches.

Customise 2021 NCLS experience to suit your needs

Add questions: Add your own denominational questions to customise any question

Translations: Use surveys in different languages

Children: Add the Child Survey for church attenders aged 8 to 14 years

Community: Add the optional Local Community Survey to hear from the wider community

Selected churches: Select certain churches to take part or group churches into clusters

A research sample: Target a representative sample of churches to ensure reliable benchmarks.

2021 NCLS: Outcomes

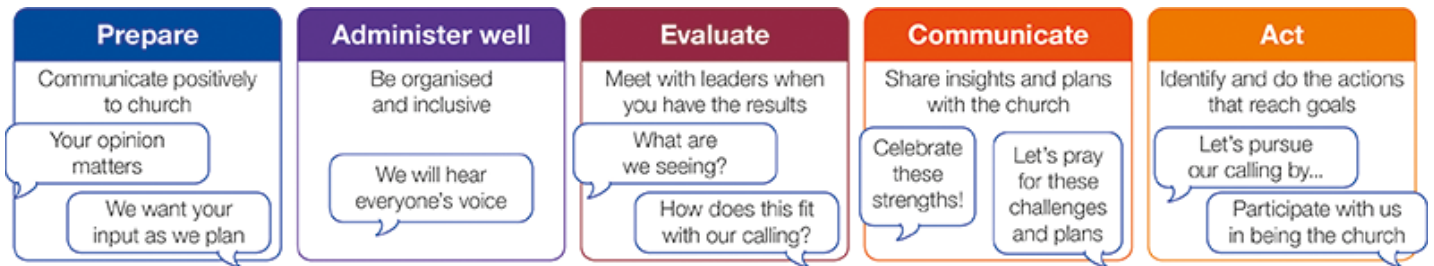
A process which resources local churches

The 2021 NCLS offers insight to:

- states, regions, and dioceses about their vitality and about the life of their churches
- local church leaders about their people's hopes, concerns and commitment
- local churches about their spiritual and pastoral strengths.

A positive and inclusive process to evaluate ministry

When local churches prepare and administer the Church Life Survey well, it is a **positive and inclusive process**. Church attenders give input to **evaluate ministry and mission**. Hearing from all attenders will help leaders pinpoint areas for focus and plan for the future.



Local churches receive own results

Participating local churches receive a *Church Life Pack* of resources, including their unique survey results in a *Church Life Profile*.

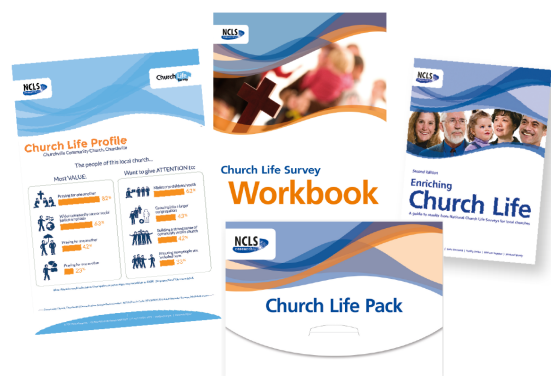
- ✓ Metrics based on credible Australian research
- ✓ Benchmarks to the wider church
- ✓ Useful for tracking change over time
- ✓ Guides possible course corrections
- ✓ A reference for church consultants.

The **Church Life Profile presents** a church's survey results using the NCLS Vitality Framework to assess church life in these key areas:

The **9 NCLS Core Qualities**, important for church health and linked with church growth.

3 Attendance Measures, such as Newcomers, Attendance Change and Young Adult Retention.

The **Church Life Pack is** designed to help churches get the most out of their results, strengthen their vitality and build direction for the future.



A process which resources denominational and regional leaders

Denomination/movement leaders get:

- help for strategic and pastoral roles
- evidence for their decisions.

Reports can offer insight and support for consultancies, new staff placements, funding applications, strategic reviews, local church strategic resourcing, ongoing training and pastoral support.



CHURCH VITALITY

LEADERSHIP

WHO GOES TO CHURCH

PROGRAMS/
SYSTEMS

CHURCH IN SOCIETY

Help for strategic and pastoral roles

Local church results: Regional leaders will receive local results to support local church ministries (with permission).

Overall results: Regional leaders will get overall results for the movement about:

- Church health across congregations
- Leaders and staff
- Local church activities

Research-based evidence for decisions

Church effectiveness

- Church health and vitality
- Governance
- Church planting

Leadership

- Effective leadership practices
- Sustainable leadership, thriving vs burnout
- Formation, mentoring

Who goes to church

- Intergenerational church
- Newcomers to church life
- Cultural diversity

Programs/systems

- Governance
- Ministry programs, youth, children, schools, outreach
- Practices of healthy churches

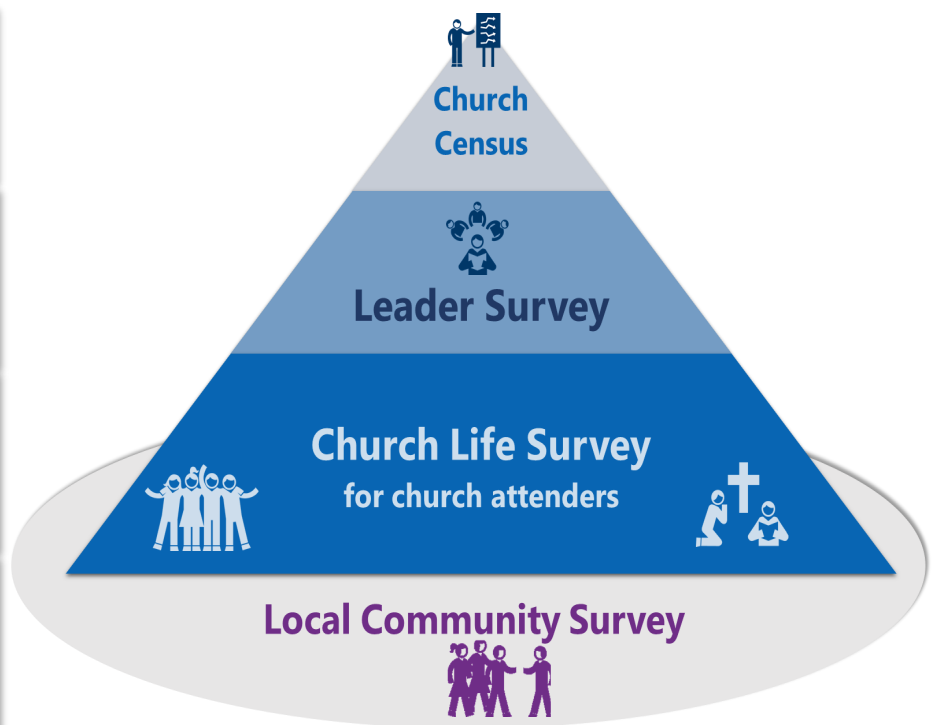
Community, spirituality

- Religious faith/practice
- Personal wellbeing
- World views
- Social issues

2021 NCLS: four interlinked surveys

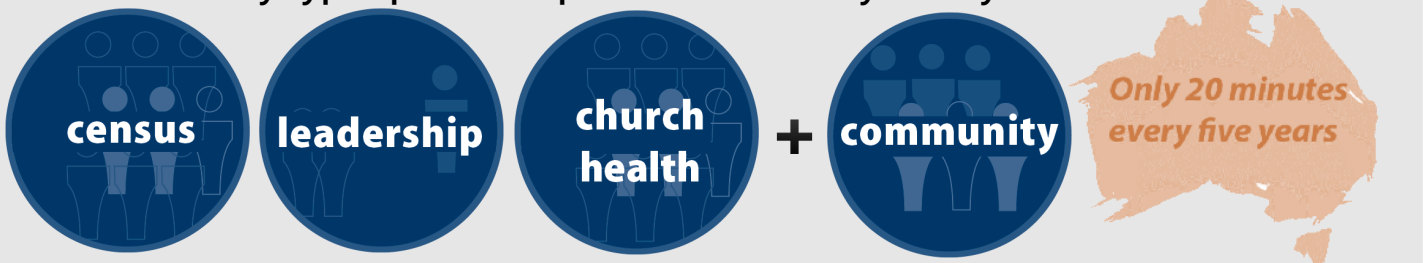
The 2021 NCLS is a series of interlinked surveys. Options for participation include:

1. Church Census: To map activities, resources and people in local churches
2. Leader Survey: For leaders to reflect on leadership development and personal wellbeing
3. Church Life Survey: For all attenders to reflect on their experience of local church vitality
4. Local Community Survey: NEW in 2021. To learn about views and practices of people in the community (beyond regular attenders).



Higher levels of participation will give greater insight to all about the character of local churches, regions, denominations and the Church in Australia.

The full 2021 NCLS experience includes all three survey types plus the optional community survey





1. Church Census: about congregations

Aim: To map activities, resources and people in local churches

Who completes the Church Census?

One person from each local church.

Paper and online surveys will be available.



What does the Church Census cover?

Topics include:

- How many local churches are there?
- What types of local churches? Rural or urban? Multicultural or monocultural? Founded since 1980?
- How many people go to church?
- How are local churches organised and led? Number of staff? Worship services? Sunday schools? Youth groups? Discipleship groups? Governance and compliance?
- How do local churches relate to their surrounding communities, to social issues and global needs? Social services and advocacy activities, educational activities, community partnerships and more.



Who gets results?

- ✓ Denominational and regional leaders get a series of reports

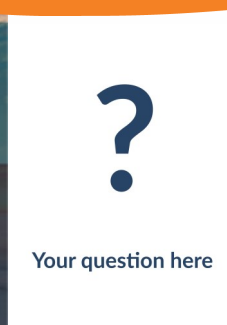
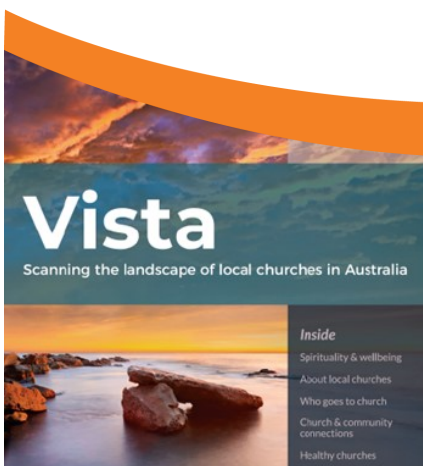
How much?

\$25 per local church.

Customise: Denominations can add their own questions to the Church Census. \$500 each

Church Census outcomes

Reports will cover number and type of local churches, how they are organised and led, how they relate to their local communities, to social issues and global needs.



2. NCLS Leader Survey: about leadership

For leaders to reflect on leadership development & personal wellbeing

Who completes the Leader Survey? What does the Leader Survey cover?

Anyone in ministry or pastoral leadership within a local church

- A. Senior leader (at minimum)
- B. Ministry/pastoral leaders who contribute significant time or who help to set directions – staff and non-staff.

Leadership Map

Demographics: age, gender, education, ethnicity.
Staffing, roles etc.

Effective Leadership

Effective governance, healthy teams, leadership development/training needs and more.

Wellbeing of Leaders

Personal wellbeing, depression, anxiety, stress.
Thriving, burnout and resilience.

Who gets results?

- ✓ **Denominational and regional leaders** get a series of reports on leader wellbeing and effectiveness.
- ✓ **Local church leadership** also gets results

How much?

\$50 per local church
(for unlimited Leader Surveys).
**Special offer for 2021 NCLS*



Customise: Denominations can add their own questions to their Leader Surveys - \$800 each



Leader Survey outcomes

Reports will provide a demographic and faith profile of leaders, as well as information about their training and development, effectiveness and sustainable practices to support wellbeing.

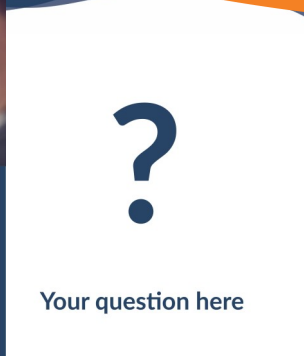


Effective and sustainable leadership practices

2016 NCLS Local Church Leaders Report

Sample Denomination

Source: 2016 National Church Life Survey



A demographic profile of senior leaders in local churches

2016 NCLS Local Church Leaders Report

Sample Denomination

Source: 2016 National Church Life Survey



3. Church Life Survey: about church health

For all attenders to reflect on their experience of local church vitality

Who completes the Attender Survey?

The Attender Survey gives each attender aged 15 years and over a voice to evaluate and reflect on their experience of church life.

Who gets results from Attender Surveys?

- ✓ Denominations.
- ✓ Regions (Dioceses, Synods, States)
- ✓ Local churches.

How much?

\$250 per local church plus \$2 per survey form ordered (adult surveys in any language and child surveys)

A Research Sample

Denominations can opt for a selection of local churches to form a representative sample.

Customise: Denominations can add their own questions to their Attender Surveys - \$1500 each

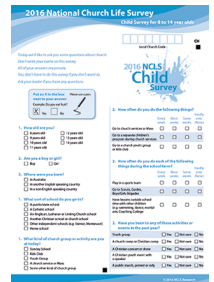
What does the Attender Survey cover?

Samples of topics on the qualities of church vitality include:

- attenders' evaluation of private devotions,
- importance of God,
- growth in faith,
- nurturing worship,
- belonging,
- evangelism,
- service, advocacy,
- leadership roles,
- involvement of children and more.

Surveys for Children (8 to 14 years)

The Child Attender Survey is an optional survey that enables churches to hear the views of children aged 8 to 14 years.



Translations available

Surveys are translated to at least 10 languages. Other languages may also be available.

Paper or online

Surveys and results will be available in paper and/or online formats.

Church Life Survey outcomes

Reports will cover attenders' age, gender, education, ethnicity, their church background, their experience of faith and church life, what they value, their commitment to the church's vision and openness to new possibilities.



The image shows a collage of survey forms in various languages, including English, Arabic, Chinese, Dinka, Italian, Karen & Chin, Korean, Tongan, and Vietnamese. A person is also shown using a smartphone, likely for the online survey format.



4. Local Community Survey: about community

To learn about views and practices of people in the community (beyond regular attenders). NEW

Who completes the Local Community Survey?



This new offering for the 2021 National Church Life Survey allows local churches to hear from those in their community who may not be regular churchgoers. The aim is to hear their views.

An online survey.

What does the Local Community Survey cover?

Personal wellbeing, spirituality, religious beliefs and practices, importance of God, attitudes to religion and church, openness to being invited to church, barriers to attending, and more.

Who gets results from Local Community Surveys?

✓ **Local churches.**





How much?

\$200 per local church (unlimited surveys).

Denominations can add their own questions to surveys

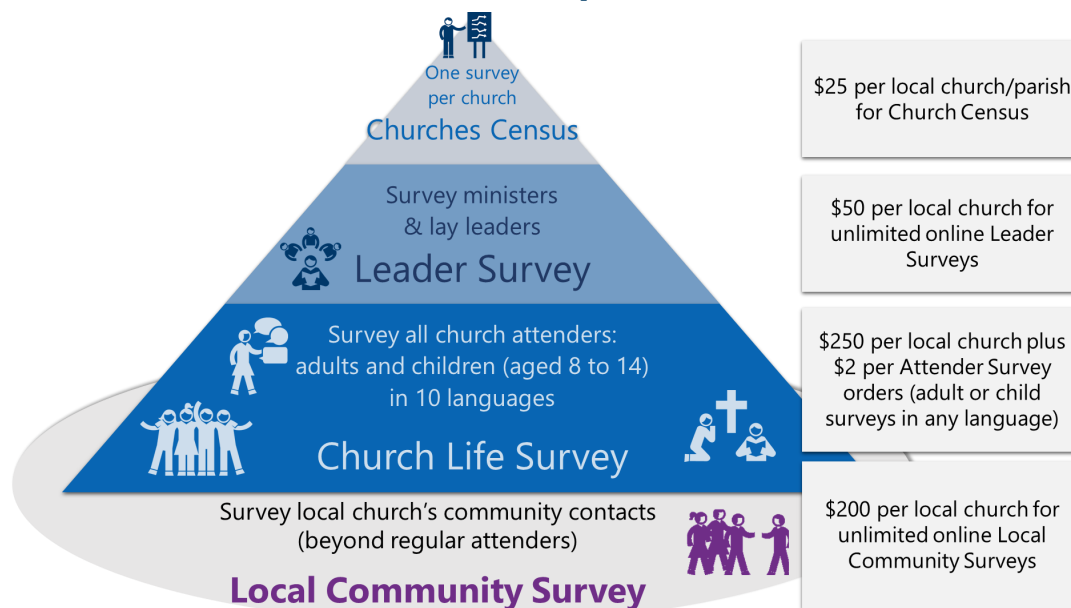
Contact NCLS Research. info@ncls.org.au or (02) 9139 2525

An overview of 2021 NCLS outcomes

Participation	Who completes survey	Output results for			
		Denomina- tional leaders	Regional leaders	Local church leaders	Local church
 1. Church Census About local churches	One person per congregation/ parish	✓	✓	-	-
 2. Leader Survey Leadership: effective and sustainable	Local church leaders: Solo or senior leaders Other ministers/pastors/priests Plus lay leadership	✓	✓	✓	-
 3. Church Life Survey Church health and vitality	Adult attenders aged 15+. <i>Available in ten languages: English, Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese, Italian, Tongan, Dinka, Karen, Chin.</i> Child attenders aged 8 to 14.	✓	✓	✓	✓
 4. Local Community Survey Community views	People in the wider community/parish (beyond regular attenders)	-	-	✓	✓

2021 NCLS Pricing

Contact NCLS Research for options to reduce costs.



NB: All prices are ex GST.

Commissioned questions for denominations

Denominations may commission questions for their own local churches.

- For Church Census \$500 per question
- For Leader Survey \$800 per question
- For Attender Survey \$1500 per question

Discounts and subsidies

We have options for bringing costs down e.g.

- 1. Small churches fee:** \$250 flat rate for churches of less than 30 regular attenders.
- 2. Small churches clusters:** Small churches who partner in 'survey clusters' will only get a single admin fee and receive a single cluster Profile of results. Surveys occur in each location. Suitable for rural churches.
- 3. Bulk discount:** High levels of local church participation (e.g. more than 80%) will attract an overall denominational discount.
- 4. Payments over multiple financial years.** You may make payments over more than one financial year.
- 5. Wider sponsorship.** The 2021 NCLS receives some wider sponsorship, to enable costs to be kept to a minimum for participating churches.

Commissioned questions for other agencies

Other agencies may also commission questions to go to a randomly selected sample of church attenders across denominations and the nation. Expected sample size = 1,500—2,000.

Price on Application

Payment models

There are a number of models for how regions or denominations manage the survey costs: full subsidy, part subsidy or local churches pay.

- 1. Full subsidy.** Denomination pays for all costs on behalf of their local churches.
- 2. Part subsidy:** Denomination covers part of the costs (such as the admin fee per church or the costs for the Research Sample of churches).
- 3. Local churches pay:** Denomination collects payment from local churches.

In general, NCLS Research invoices the NCLS Regional Co-ordinator as the key contact point.

Each region may choose to pass on some or all of the costs to the local church. Regions will be invited to pay a 30% deposit based on ballpark quotes during FY 2021 or FY 2022. Payments can be made over a number of Financial Years.

2021 National Church Life Survey

Every five years, alongside the National Census, thousands of churches around Australia participate in the National Church Life Survey (NCLS).

Each survey contributes to the most comprehensive view of church life in Australia and equips leadership at the local, regional and national levels.

We hope you will join this collaborative venture.

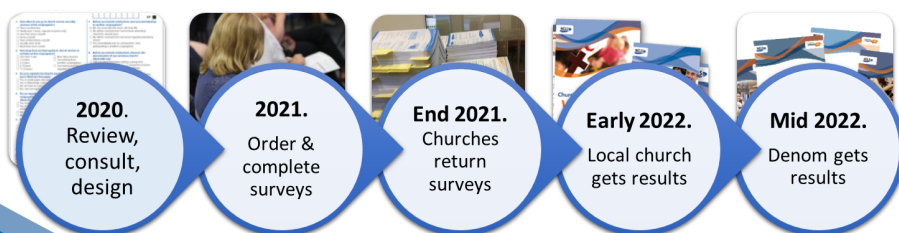
The NCLS Research team

To get involved as a denomination/region or movement...

1. Identify your NCLS Regional Coordinator
2. Send NCLS Research an *Expression of Interest* by end of December 2020
3. Confirm type of involvement by March 2021
 - a. Which surveys: church census, leaders, all attenders or local community?
 - b. Aim to involve all/most churches, a research sample or churches opt in?
 - c. Do you want special extra denominational commissioned questions?
4. You will receive communication material to inform local churches.

Partnering with denominations and movements in Australia

- Acts 2 Alliance (A2A)
- Anglican Church of Australia
- Australian Christian Churches (ACC) incl. Hillsong Church
- Baptist Churches
- C3 Church
- Catholic Church in Australia
- CityLife
- Christian & Missionary Alliance
- Christian Reformed Churches
- Churches of Christ
- Congregational Churches
- CRC Churches International
- Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (FIEC)
- Independent Pentecostal Holiness Church (IPHC)
- International Network of Churches
- Lutheran Church of Australia
- Presbyterian Church of Australia
- Seventh-day Adventist Church
- The Salvation Army
- Uniting Church in Australia
- Vineyard Churches in Australia
- Independent Churches
- plus more...



PO Box 827 Strawberry Hills NSW 2012 Australia

info@ncls.org.au

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